

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-09

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P R 171945Z MAR 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 064838

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LA, US

SUBJECT: MIA'S IN LAOS

REF: A. 75 VIENTIANE 6645, B. STATE 010021, C. 75 STATE
271089

1. HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON MIA'S MET WITH SECRETARY
MORNING MARCH 12 TO DISCUSS ALL ASPECTS OF MIA QUESTION AS
WELL AS MORE GENERAL ISSUES OF OUR RELATIONS WITH INDOCHINA
COUNTRIES. COMMITTEE REPORTED ON ITS RECENT TRIPS TO
HANOI AND VIENTIANE. INTER ALIA, IT WAS AGREED THAT WE
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SHOULD MAKE NEW APPROACH TO LAO ON MIA'S AT EARLIEST

OPPORTUNITY TO FOLLOW UP ON COMMITTEE'S TALK WITH PDRL OFFICIALS. COMMITTEE PRESS RELEASE AFTER MEETING NOTED SPECIFICALLY THAT "ACCORDING TO CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY, SECRETARY KISSINGER TOLD THE COMMITTEE THAT SINCE WE HAVE A DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN LAOS, WE WILL AGAIN MAKE A STRONG APPEAL TO THE LAOTIANS FOR A FORMAL ACCOUNTING OF OUR MIA'S IN THAT COUNTRY." (FULL TEXT OF PRESS RELEASE BEING SENT SEPTEL).

2. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE APPROACH PDRL AT HIGHEST APPROPRIATE LEVEL TO INDICATE THAT COMMITTEE HAS REPORTED TO PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY ON ITS DISCUSSION WITH LAO OFFICIALS DECEMBER 23, AND THAT YOU HAVE NOW BEEN INSTRUCTED TO FOLLOW UP ON THESE DISCUSSIONS.

3. YOU SHOULD NOTE THAT COMMITTEE WAS SPECIFICALLY TOLD, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT LAO WOULD SEARCH FOR REMAINS OF OUR MIA'S AS PART OF SEARCH FOR LAO REMAINS AND THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW STATUS OF THEIR EFFORTS AND ANY RESULTS SO FAR (REFTEL A, PARA 6). YOU SHOULD ASK WHETHER FILES TURNED OVER TO PDRL BY THE COMMITTEE HAVE BEEN STUDIED AND WHAT FURTHER INFORMATION ON THEM LAO COULD PROVIDE. YOU SHOULD INDICATE OUR CONTINUING INTERESTS IN OBTAINING INFORMATION ON, AND ACCESS TO, CRASH AND GRAVE SITES. YOU SHOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT BOTH PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO OBTAINING AS FULL AN ACCOUNTING AS POSSIBLE ON MIA'S IN LAOS, NOW THAT PEACE RESTORED AND COUNTRY UNIFIED, AND THEY VIEW MATTER AS ONE OF CONSIDERABLE SIGNIFICANCE IN FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR RELATIONS WITH THE NEW LAOS.

4. YOU SHOULD ALSO TAKE OPPORTUNITY TO RENEW REQUEST FOR REPORT ON CHARLES DEAN, NOTING THAT IT HAS BEEN MORE THAN 18 MONTHS SINCE THE DISAPPEARANCE OF DEAN AND SHARMAN. YOU MIGHT STATE THAT WITH ESTABLISHMENT OF PDRL, COMMUNICATIONS WITH AUTHORITIES IN AREA WHERE THEY DISAPPEARED ARE PRESUMABLY BETTER AND MINISTRY IN A BETTER POSITION TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON THIS CASE.

5. DEPARTMENT ALSO WOULD LIKE REPORT ON RESULTS IF ANY CONFIDENTIAL

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OF RECENT AUSTRALIAN EFFORTS (REFTELS 2 AND 3) IN THE CASE.

6. IF YOU THINK IT WOULD BE HELPFUL FOR THIS DISCUSSION, YOU COULD INFORM LAO THAT COMMITTEE IS CONSIDERING A SECOND TRIP TO INDOCHINA DURING EASTER PERIOD (APRIL 16-24) AT WHICH TIME THEY WOULD HOPE AGAIN TO MEET WITH LAO OFFICIALS ON MIA'S. IF PDRL DOES NOT HAVE SUBSTANTIVE

ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS AT THIS TIME, YOU COULD SUGGEST TO THEM THE DESIRABILITY OF THEIR HAVING SOMETHING TO REPORT TO COMMITTEE IF THEY RETURN IN APRIL.

7. FYI, COMMITTEE IS REQUESTING ADDITIONAL FILES ON MEN MISSING IN LAOS TO BE GIVEN TO PDRL WITH REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION. WE PLAN TO POUCH THE FILES TO YOU WHEN THEY ARE READY, EITHER FOR YOU TO GIVE TO PDRL OR FOR COMMITTEE TO DO SO IF THEY MANAGE A SECOND VISIT. END FYI. KISSINGER

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